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February 6, 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
S-221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
S-230 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker of the House
H-232 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Democratic Leader
H-204 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Reauthorization of Violence Against Women Act ("VAWA")

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi:

I am writing to urge you to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act ("VAWA"). Last session, the bill passed the Senate with bipartisan support, but expired in the House of Representatives in the final days of the 112th Congress.

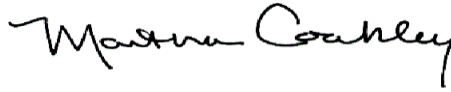
Since its passage in 1994, VAWA has brought the issue of violence against women to the forefront and helped law enforcement to prosecute cases. VAWA also provides critical support for families and victims of rape and domestic abuse, including funding rape crisis hotlines and centers, community violence prevention programs, and legal aid for female victims of violence.

The success of the bill has been astounding, and has paved the way for increased protections on the state level. Since the Act's inception, all 50 states have passed laws making stalking a crime and have strengthened their state rape laws. The annual number of domestic violence incidents has dropped by more than 50%,¹ and the number of women killed by an intimate partner has decreased by 34%.² VAWA is estimated to have saved the country \$12.6 billion in costs associated with violence against women in its first 6 years alone.³

There is still a great deal of work to be done. The fight to protect women and families from violence is one that never ends, and the reauthorization of VAWA is a critical part of those efforts. We cannot and should not take a step backwards after the progress we have made.

Thank you for considering these comments as you review VAWA, presented by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy and Senator Mike Crapo. I respectfully urge you to act quickly to reauthorize VAWA.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martha Coakley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Martha" and last name "Coakley" clearly distinguishable.

Martha Coakley
Massachusetts Attorney General

cc: The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Michael Crapo
The Honorable Elizabeth Warren

1 Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy's Office.

2 Uniform Crime report (UCR) Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR), Federal Bureau of Investigation. (Decrease is based on data collected between 1993 and 2007).

3 Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States. (2003). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centers for Injury Prevention and Control. Atlanta, GA.